

What are Marine Protected Areas?

Marine protected areas (MPAs) are marine or estuarine waters set aside primarily to protect or conserve marine life and its associated habitat. MPAs have varying levels of protections and allowed uses.

Types of MPAs

California uses three main MPA classifications: State Marine Reserve (SMR), State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA) and State Marine Park (SMP). The central California region also includes a State Marine Recreational Management Area (SMRMA).

Central California MPAs

Central California MPAs went into effect on September 27, 2007. The 28 MPAs and one SMRMA encompass 204 square miles (close to 18 percent) of state waters in the central California region, with about 84 of those miles designated as "no-take" SMRs. Central California MPAs are part of a network of MPAs established statewide along the California coast.



In 1999, California's Marine Life Protection Act was passed into law with a clear mandate: to re-evaluate all existing MPAs and potentially design new MPAs with input from a broad array of stakeholders. The California Department of Fish and Game (now known as the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, or CDFW) was integral to this effort. The MPAs in this brochure were designed, in part, to:

- Protect and sustain marine life, habitats and ecosystems
- Provide opportunities to learn from and enjoy marine areas subject to reduced human disturbance

For more information, visit the California Marine Protected Area website at www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa, email MLPAComments@dfg.ca.gov, or visit the central California CDFW office:



CDFW Monterey Office
20 Lower Ragsdale Dr.
Suite 100



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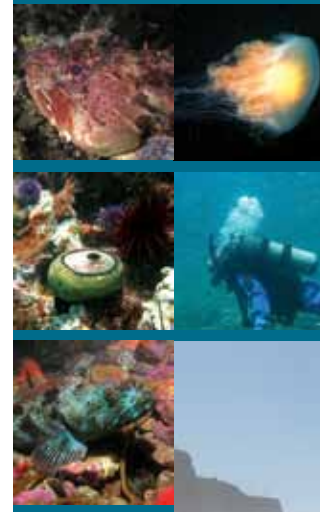


Sustainable Fish and Wildlife Resources



California Marine Protected Areas

Central California: Pigeon Point to Point Conception



CDFW photos by M. Elyash and D. Stein



CDFW file photo

On January 1, 2013 the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) officially became the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). Alternate communication formats of this document are available upon request. If reasonable accommodation is needed, call CDFW at (707) 964-5026. The California Relay Service for the deaf or hearing-impaired can be used from TDD phones at (800) 735-2929.

Central California MPA Regulations

Effective September 27, 2007

Note: This document does not replace the official regulatory language found in California Code of Regulations Title 14

SMR	MPA Name	Permitted/Prohibited Uses
	Natural Bridges, Elkhorn Slough, Moro Cojo Slough, Lovers Point, Asilomar, Carmel Pinnacles, Pt. Lobos, Pt. Sur, Big Creek, Piedras Blancas, Morro Bay, Point Buchon, Vandenberg	Take of all living marine resources is prohibited.
SMCA	Take of all living marine resources is prohibited, EXCEPT:	
	Año Nuevo	Take of giant kelp by hand.
	Greyhound Rock	Recreational and commercial take of salmon, squid, and giant kelp by hand. Recreational take of other finfish by hook-and-line from shore only.
	Elkhorn Slough (see map on reverse)	Recreational take of finfish by hook-and-line only, and clams from the slough's north shore near the Moss Landing State Wildlife Area.
	Soquel Canyon, Portuguese Ledge	Recreational and commercial take of pelagic finfish*.
	Edward F. Ricketts	Recreational take of finfish by hook-and-line only. Recreational and commercial take of giant kelp and bull kelp by hand.
	Pacific Grove Marine Gardens, Carmel Bay	Recreational take of finfish. Commercial take of giant kelp and bull kelp by hand.
	Point Lobos, Big Creek	Recreational and commercial take of salmon and albacore. Commercial take of spot prawn.
	Point Sur, Piedras Blancas, Point Buchon	Recreational and commercial take of salmon and albacore.
	Cambria (also a State Marine Park)	Recreational take of living marine resources.
SMRMA	White Rock (Cambria)	Commercial take of giant kelp and bull kelp.
	Morro Bay	North of latitude 35° 19.70' N only: Recreational take of finfish, commercial oyster aquaculture, and storing finfish taken outside of the SMRMA for bait purposes.

MPA boundaries, maps, coordinates and allowed uses are available on your smartphone or other mobile or web-enabled device at www.dfg.ca.gov/m/MPA. This information is also available on the CDFW website at www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa and through your local CDFW office.



CDFW photo by D. Stein

Central California Marine Protected Areas



* See current fishing regulations for definition of "pelagic finfish."

Unless specifically prohibited, non-consumptive activities such as diving, surfing, swimming and boating are allowed within MPAs, as long as take restrictions are followed.